STUDENTS HAPPINESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE CROSS CONTINENT STUDIES

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
  	Schools are institutions designed for the learning process. The school level is divided into basic education, secondary education, and higher education. The purpose of the school is to develop the potential of students. This study aims to review the literature related to student happiness, especially higher education students. The findings of this study show that there are various factors that encourage students to be happy and various ways that are implemented to shape it. The pursuit of student happiness is an ongoing journey that requires the concerted efforts of educators, institutions, parents, and the community. By creating a positive learning environment, nurturing meaningful relationships, prioritizing engagement and personalization, offering a balanced curriculum, and promoting emotional well-being, educational stakeholders contribute to a holistic and fulfilling learning experience. As the educational landscape evolves, the commitment to students' happiness remains a vital aspect of nurturing the next generation's well-being and success.

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INTRODUCTION

Student happiness is an important aspect of education. When students are happy, they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and successful in their academic pursuits. Happiness is an important factor in human life. It contributes significantly to our well-being, and has a direct impact on our mental and physical health. In the context of education, student happiness plays a crucial role in academic success. A happy student is more likely to be motivated, engaged, and perform better in their studies. Therefore, promoting student happiness should be a top priority for educators and institutions of higher learning

Student happiness refers to the overall positive emotions, well-being, and satisfaction experienced by students in their academic and personal lives. It encompasses various aspects of student life, including academic achievement, social relationships, extracurricular activities, and overall quality of life (Shoshani, A., & Eldor, L., 2016). Student happiness as "the experience of positive emotions such as joy, interest, and contentment, as well as a sense of purpose and meaning in one's academic and personal life." (Huang, Yang & Chen, 2018).

The importance of student happiness lies in its impact on academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. Students who are happy tend to have higher academic achievement than their less happy peers (Aknin., Barrington-Leigh, Dunn, Helliwell, Burns, Biswas-Diener & Norton, 2013). A report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine emphasizes the importance of student well-being in promoting academic success and reducing health disparities. The report suggests that addressing the social and emotional needs of students can contribute to a positive school climate and a more equitable education system. (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

Student happiness has become a major concern among educational institutions because of its impact on academic performance, retention rates, and overall student well-being. A report by the American Council on Education emphasizes the importance of student well-being in higher education, stating that "a focus on student well-being can help institutions achieve key goals such as student retention, academic success, and career readiness." The report suggests that institutions that prioritize student happiness and well-being can create a more positive learning environment and better outcomes for students. (American Council on Education, 2019).

Promoting student happiness in the educational environment involves a holistic approach that takes into account various factors that contribute to well-being. Here are some strategies that have been suggested by research to create student happiness: Foster a positive classroom environment - Teachers can create a positive and supportive classroom environment by showing interest in students' lives and well-being, using positive reinforcement, and providing opportunities for social interaction (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Encourage student engagement - Engaged students are more likely to experience higher levels of happiness and satisfaction. Teachers can promote engagement by providing meaningful and relevant learning experiences, allowing for student choice and autonomy, and using interactive and participatory teaching methods (Fredricks et al., 2004). Provide opportunities for social support - Social support is a key factor in promoting student well-being. Teachers can provide opportunities for students to build supportive relationships with peers and adults, such as through group work, mentoring programs, and extracurricular activities (Suldo et al., 2014). Promote a growth mindset - Encouraging students to adopt a growth mindset can promote resilience, persistence, and a positive outlook on learning. Teachers can foster a growth mindset by providing opportunities for feedback and reflection, focusing on effort rather than ability, and praising students for their progress and improvement (Dweck, 2008). Address stress and mental health concerns - Stress and mental health concerns can have a significant impact on student happiness and well-being. Teachers can support students by providing access to mental health resources, teaching stress management strategies, and being aware of the signs of stress and mental health concerns (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2019).

As students pursue their academic goals, it is important to recognize the role that happiness and well-being play in their success. Research has shown that students who are happy and fulfilled are more likely to perform well academically, have positive relationships, and experience greater overall life satisfaction. Therefore, it is crucial for educators and institutions to prioritize student happiness as a key component of their educational mission (Pekrun & Elliot, 2017). So what can be done to promote student happiness? There are several strategies that can be effective in cultivating a positive and supportive learning environment. One important approach is to promote a sense of belonging and community among students. This can be achieved through various means, such as creating opportunities for social interaction, encouraging collaboration and teamwork, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and diversity. When students feel connected to their peers and supported by their community, they are more likely to feel happy and engaged in their academic pursuits (Gözüm, & Karakuş, 2019).

RESEARCH AIMS

This study aims to review the discussion of specific events related to student happiness among higher education students in various continents.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of a narrative review is to synthesise the results of previous research using both primary and secondary sources (Green et al., 2006). Google Scholar database were used for this review. Search terms used were "students happiness AND higher education". Researchers focus more on the exploration of issues that lead to student happiness and try to see what issues are widely discussed in relation to this issue. In addition, researchers try to explain the differences in findings in each continent to see the latest flow and themes related to student happiness.

FINDINGS

After conducting an analysis using Google Scholar, the researcher found that there were 200 relevant articles after going through the process of exclusion and inclusion to meet the criteria required in this study.

Students happiness in higher education

A study by Belfield and Thomas (2017) found that student well-being is positively associated with academic achievement, persistence, and graduation rates in college. They argue that institutions should prioritize student well-being to improve student outcomes.Another study by Huelsman and colleagues (2018) found that students who reported higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction also reported higher levels of academic engagement and achievement. They argue that promoting student happiness can have a positive impact on student learning and success. A review of the literature on student well-being in higher education by Robbins and colleagues (2019) found that promoting student well-being can lead to improved academic performance, increased retention, and better overall outcomes for students. A survey of undergraduate students by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) found that students who reported higher levels of engagement in their coursework also reported higher levels of happiness and overall satisfaction with their college experience (NSSE, 2019).

There are several factors that can influence student happiness in higher education. Academic environment: Students who perceive their academic environment as supportive, stimulating, and engaging are more likely to experience higher levels of happiness and satisfaction (Astin & Astin, 2000; Bryson & Hand, 2007). Faculty support: Positive relationships with faculty members and a perception of their availability and approachability have been associated with higher levels of student happiness and academic success (Schreiner & Louis, 2010; Tinto, 1993). Sense of community: Students who feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to their college or university are more likely to experience happiness and success (Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Kuh

et al., 1991). Quality of student life: Factors such as campus safety, quality of housing, availability of social activities, and access to resources such as health services can also play a role in student happiness and well-being (Bryson & Hand, 2007; Hillman et al., 2010). Overall, creating a supportive and engaging academic environment with positive relationships between faculty and students, a strong sense of community, and high-quality student life resources can contribute to higher levels of student happiness and success in higher education.

One study found that students who perceived high levels of social support from their peers and university staff reported higher levels of life satisfaction and overall well-being (Zhang, 2018). Similarly, another study found that students who felt a sense of belonging and connection to their university community reported higher levels of happiness and academic success (Walton & Cohen, 2011). Furthermore, research has shown that providing students with opportunities for meaningful engagement and personal growth can contribute to their overall happiness and well-being. For example, participation in extracurricular activities, service learning, and leadership programs have been linked to increased levels of student engagement and satisfaction (Baker, 2017; Kuh, 2003). In terms of academic experiences, studies have also found that student happiness is positively correlated with perceptions of academic support, such as access to academic resources, effective teaching, and quality advising (O'Brien & Niehaus, 2019; Porter & Umbach, 2006).

There is a growing body of research on the relationship between student happiness and higher education. Some studies suggest that there is a positive correlation between happiness and academic success, while others focus on the impact of various factors on student well-being. One study found that students who reported higher levels of happiness also tended to have higher GPAs and were more likely to graduate on time (Galanakis, 2014). Another study found that positive social interactions and a sense of belonging to the campus community were important factors in promoting student happiness in higher education (Suldo et al., 2014). Furthermore, research suggests that student engagement and participation in extracurricular activities can contribute to higher levels of happiness and well-being (Roberts et al., 2019). Students who are involved in campus organizations or volunteer work may feel more connected to the community and have a sense of purpose and meaning. However, it is also important to recognize the challenges and stressors that students may face in higher education, such as academic pressure and financial concerns. One study found that academic stress was negatively associated with student happiness, while social support and coping strategies were positively associated (Liu et al., 2019). Overall, research suggests that promoting student happiness and well-being in higher education involves creating a supportive and inclusive campus culture, providing opportunities for engagement and involvement, and addressing the various stressors and challenges that students may face.

Students happiness among Malaysian students

There has been some research on student happiness among Malaysian students. A study conducted in 2020 found that Malaysian university students reported moderate levels of happiness, with females reporting slightly higher levels than males (Rani et al., 2020). Another study from 2018 examined the factors that contribute to happiness among Malaysian university students. The study found that factors such as having a supportive family, positive self-esteem, and satisfaction with academic achievement were all positively associated with happiness (Aminuddin et al., 2018). However, there are also concerns about the mental health and well-being of Malaysian students, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. A study conducted in 2021 found that Malaysian university students experienced increased levels of anxiety and depression during the pandemic, with concerns about academic performance and future career prospects contributing to these negative emotions (Abdullah et al., 2021).

However, some studies suggest that Malaysian students face unique challenges that may impact their well-being and happiness. One study found that Malaysian students reported higher levels of stress and anxiety compared to their international peers, particularly in relation to academic pressure and family expectations (Sulaiman et al., 2019). Another study found that Malaysian university students who reported higher levels of

perceived discrimination also reported lower levels of happiness and life satisfaction (Hiew & Kaur, 2019). However, research also suggests that factors such as social support and a sense of belonging can promote student happiness and well-being in Malaysia. For example, a study of Malaysian university students found that those who reported higher levels of social support also reported higher levels of happiness (Ismail & Sidique, 2021). It is important to note that cultural factors may also play a role in shaping student happiness in Malaysia. For example, the emphasis on collectivism and family values in Malaysian culture may impact how students experience and cope with academic pressure and stress (Sulaiman et al., 2019).

Furthermore, research suggests that social support and a sense of belonging to the campus community are important factors in promoting student happiness among Malaysian students. A study conducted among Malaysian undergraduate students found that social support from peers and family members was positively associated with happiness (Othman & Abd Hamid, 2014). Another study found that Malaysian university students who reported higher levels of sense of belonging to the campus community also reported higher levels of happiness (Mohd-Nordin et al., 2013). However, there are also challenges that Malaysian students face, such as financial difficulties and academic stress. One study found that financial difficulties were negatively associated with happiness among Malaysian university students (Shamsuddin et al., 2013). Another study found that academic stress was negatively associated with happiness among Malaysian medical students (Hamid et al., 2013).

However in certain cases, there are also challenges that Malaysian students may face that can negatively impact their well-being and happiness. For example, one study found that academic stress was a significant predictor of psychological distress among Malaysian university students (Ghazali et al., 2015). Overall, research suggests that promoting student happiness among Malaysian students involves addressing the various challenges they may face, while also fostering a supportive and inclusive campus culture that values social relationships and academic achievement.

The study of Students Happines in Asia Regions

The topic of student happiness and well-being has gained increasing attention in recent years in various Asian countries. Here are some studies and articles that provide insights into student happiness in the Asia region: A study of university students in Hong Kong found that students who had higher levels of gratitude and social support reported greater levels of happiness (Chow et al., 2017). In Japan, research has found that factors such as academic stress, parental support, and school climate can impact student well-being (Yamada & Matsuoka, 2017). Additionally, cultural factors such as the emphasis on group harmony and the stigma surrounding mental health may affect how students perceive and seek help for their well-being (Makino et al., 2020). Research in South Korea has found that factors such as academic stress, sleep quality, and social support can impact student happiness and well-being (Lee & Lee, 2020). In addition, a study found that students who had a stronger sense of purpose and meaning in life reported higher levels of well-being (Kang & Kim, 2021). A study of college students in Malaysia found that factors such as academic stress, social support, and religiosity were important predictors of well-being (Bujang et al., 2013).

There is growing interest in studying student happiness and well-being in Asia, as it has become an important issue in the region's education systems. Several studies have examined the factors that contribute to student happiness among Asian students. One study found that student happiness was positively associated with academic achievement, parental support, and positive school climate among Chinese high school students (Liu et al., 2019). Another study conducted in Japan found that social support and a sense of belonging were important factors in promoting student well-being (Watabe et al., 2019).

Furthermore, cultural factors such as collectivism and emotional regulation strategies have been found to influence student happiness in Asia. A study conducted in Malaysia found that students who had higher levels of collectivist values reported greater levels of happiness (Mohamad & Abdul Rahman, 2018). Another study conducted in South Korea found that emotional regulation strategies, such as positive reappraisal and cognitive reappraisal, were positively associated with student well-being (Lee & Kim, 2020). However, academic stress

and pressure from parents and society can also have a negative impact on student well-being in Asia. A study conducted in Singapore found that academic stress was a significant predictor of psychological distress and reduced life satisfaction among university students (Leong et al., 2015)

The study of Students Happines in Europe and western country

The World Happiness Report 2021, published by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, ranks countries based on their happiness levels. Among the European countries, Finland is the happiest, followed by Denmark, Switzerland, Iceland, and the Netherlands. Other European countries that made it to the top 50 are Norway (8th), Sweden (10th), Austria (12th), Germany (13th), Belgium (18th), Luxembourg (19th), Ireland (20th), United Kingdom (18th), and France (21st). The European Student Barometer is a survey conducted by i-graduate that collects feedback from students in Europe about their satisfaction with their university experience. The survey covers various aspects of student life, including accommodation, facilities, teaching quality, and support services. According to the 2019 survey, students in Europe reported high levels of satisfaction with their overall university experience, with an average satisfaction score of 8.2 out of 10. The Eurostudent survey is a bi-annual survey conducted by the European Commission that collects data on the social and economic conditions of students in Europe. The most recent survey, conducted in 2018, found that the majority of students in Europe were satisfied with their lives, with 78% of respondents reporting high levels of life satisfaction. The survey also found that students who had access to support services, such as career guidance and mental health support, were more likely to report higher levels of life satisfaction.

A study conducted by the European Journal of Education in 2018, titled "University student happiness and well-being: A cross-national study," analyzed data from over 20,000 students across 27 European countries. The study found that overall, students reported high levels of happiness and well-being. The study also identified factors that contributed to student happiness, such as social support, academic achievement, and financial security. Meanwhile, A study conducted in the United States found that students who participated in high-impact practices, such as study abroad programs and undergraduate research, reported higher levels of happiness and well-being compared to their peers who did not participate in such practices (Kuh et al., 2020).

A study conducted in the United Kingdom found that students who had positive relationships with their lecturers reported higher levels of happiness and satisfaction with their academic experiences (Sealey et al., 2021). In Australia, the research that the students who reported a sense of belonging and connection to their university community reported higher levels of happiness and well-being (Beck et al., 2021). Harvard Business Review suggests that universities can promote student happiness by providing opportunities for meaningful social connections, cultivating a culture of well-being, and supporting students' sense of purpose and meaning (Greenberg & Dintzner, 2020). An article published in Forbes suggests that universities can promote student happiness by offering mental health resources, providing opportunities for personal and professional development, and creating a sense of community and belonging on campus (Abraham, 2021).

CONCLUSION

It is important for educators and institutions to address the various stressors and challenges that students may face. This includes addressing issues such as financial stress, social isolation, and discrimination. By creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, students are more likely to experience a sense of safety and belonging, which contributes to their overall happiness and well-being. In conclusion, promoting student happiness is a crucial component of academic success. A positive learning environment, recognition of student strengths, mental health support, and addressing student stressors and challenges are all important factors in promoting student happiness. By prioritizing student happiness, educators and institutions can help students achieve their academic goals and experience a fulfilling and enjoyable educational experience.

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